

Private Revelation

A Critical Analysis

by
Peter Valde-Magnus



"Satan transforms himself into an Angel of Light for the sake of deception"
St. John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel Chapter 37

Instauratio Press

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Then some of the scribes and pharisees answered him, saying: Master we would see a sign from thee.

Who answering said to them: An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

Matt. 13:38-39

Preface

This little book 'Private Revelation' is an attempt to remind the faithful of the proper attitude Catholics should have towards the wave of apparitions and extraordinary phenomena so prevalent in the world today. Although many will accuse the author of being negative and narrow-minded, on the contrary, the author is in fact protecting true private revelations by promoting traditional Church teaching in the matter. For anyone to say they are promoting Our Lady's or Our Lord's messages by circumventing the warnings and counsels of great Catholic mystics like St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross is tantamount to starting a new system of mystical theology.

We know from the history of tradition how God wills to communicate to man. We also know that God has often allowed the devil to appear as an 'Angel of Light' in order to test the humility of even the Saints.

If the pseudo-mystics of our day think they can ignore the rules for discerning true from false revelation, they are deceiving themselves. Their argument that it is "close-minded" to exercise cautious reserve, to withhold belief in these apparitions until the Catholic Church approves them, is a fallacious argument. They are the ones who are close-minded because they refuse to entertain the real possibility of fraud and satanic intervention. Indeed, they seem to work from a starting principle that it is impossible for the devil to appear as the 'Blessed Virgin Mary'. We are being asked to close our minds to the possibility that Satan might try to deceive the elect by coming to us under the appearance of the 'Blessed Virgin Mary'.

No, we cannot accept such naivete, such poor mystical theology. Moreover, we understand the workings of the Mystery of Iniquity by the history of Satan's work on earth. He has continuously tried to counterfeit God's work, because he knows how powerfully man is attracted to goodness. He has counterfeited the true Christian Church with many false 'Christian' churches.

He counterfeits the true Jesus Christ with false versions of Christ's teaching. And now he is counterfeiting the true Virgin Mary with false 'Marys'.

Instead of following the authentic messages of Our Lady which have Church approval (Lourdes, La Salette, and Fatima), the Catholic people are being duped into chasing after false apparitions, such as those at Nowra, Dayvado and Modjgorje. Our Lady at Fatima has clearly said: "God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart". This is the Will of God. If Satan can distract

the Catholic people away from the Will of God by observing fasts and devotions on Fridays instead of the First Saturdays, he will have succeeded in keeping the people from fulfilling Our Lady's true requests, thus stopping the Catholic people from doing the Will of God.

Here lies the heart of the matter. The most precious thing we have to offer God is our will. Thus God asks our obedience, the conformity of our will to His Will. If Satan can gain our obedience, even by asking us to pray the Rosary at the place and at the hour he determines, then Satan obtains the victory; for he thus succeeds in stopping our conformity to the Divine Will. Hence, the old saying: "Satan will even inspire us to do something good, in order to prevent us from doing something better."

Thus, by avoiding false apparitions we are avoiding obedience to evil spirits and saving our obedience for God. Let us follow therefore, only true apparitions and authentic private revelation.

Father William T. Welsh.

Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

November 21, 1990.

Private Revelation

An analysis of present-day pseudo-mystics.

by Peter Valde-Magnus

Today there is a proliferation of false prophets and pseudo-mystics. Every country has them. Here in Australia we have the 'Little Pebble' of Nowra, alias William Kamm, Georgette Harb of Sydney, Anna of Adelaide, Colleen of Queensland, Shirley and Desma of Victoria, Gardener of Caloundra, Paul of Laura, NSW, and many more. In other countries such as Africa: Sister Mildred, Bernadette, Elizabeth and hundreds of others. In Belgium: Andre, Lemache, Anni. In Canada: Brother Joseph-Francis, Rosemary, Le-Peta, Marie Paul, Nancy Noron, White Army of Mary. In England: Nora Arthurs, Sister Margaret, Pamela. In France: Madeleine, Michelle and Fr. Jean-Marie. In Germany: Legge, Renate Urban, Brother John, Gertrud Legge. In Holland: Cecelia, Frans, Our Lady of all nations, Van Geel. In Italy: Caro, Jilli, San Damiano, Oula, Marietta, Paulina, Father Luigi, Simonetti. In the United States: Peter Randel, Necedah, Bayside, Ann Bennett, Leslie Garay, The Transposer, Father X (Peter McLaughlin). In Spain: the White Cross of Palma, Ampora Cuevas/El Escorial, Palma de Troya, Palevern. In Guatemala: Sister Guadalupe, C. and C. Alvares, and there are hundreds of others too numerous to mention. They are springing up all around the world.

The 'Little Pebble' (Alias William Kamm.)

Mr. Kamm's parents decided, more than 30 years ago, to immigrate to Australia with their eight year old German born son. Before taking on his role as a "seer", he was a finance officer with a Wollongong NSW Building Society. He now (1990) lives with his wife and four children in a luxuriously furnished two-storey house. When questioned about the luxury, his reply was that it must be suitable for the next Pope, namely, William Kamm. (But see footnote 2 on page

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He went to the United States and spent some time at another 'Holy Site', at Bayside in New York. Upon his return he claimed that he received locutions from the Blessed Virgin. He promoted the Bayside messages, but then decided to promote his own messages given to him by 'Our Lady'.

William Kamm claimed he had as his Spiritual Director, His Lordship, Bishop T. Muldoon, who stated in 1983: "I have never been Spiritual Director to William Kamm. I interviewed him at his request, on several occasions, and he sent me many of his 'messages'. With great patience, charity, spirit of prayer and discernment, I considered the matter for some two years. I became more and more convinced that he was suffering from hallucinations and megalomania (insane exaltation, mania for big things). I informed his Bishop of this conclusion. His Bishop, Most Reverend William Murray, of Wollongong, informed of my conclusions, instituted his own Commission of Inquiry, and, in a Pastoral Letter read in all the churches of his Diocese, condemned the 'messages' being and to be issued, and forbade his people to go to the place where the 'Little Pebble' was operating. But the 'Little Pebble' and his followers refused to obey."

When a Bishop, after an investigation, condemns a seer, the case is finished. Even Rome will never pronounce a contrary judgement.¹

The Bishop also stated: "I realise that many people in perfectly good faith have participated in prayers and devotions promoted by the 'Little Pebble'. I do not in any way wish to censure or criticize them for this. I am sure that because of their sincerity, their prayers would have been acceptable to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. But for the future, I strongly advise them not to participate in any religious devotions organised by this person calling himself the 'Little Pebble'." (October 29, 1984)

Bishop T. Muldoon dissociated himself from the 'Little Pebble'. He wrote to him on June 29, 1984: "Contrary to what I have said, you have told many people that I have approved the authenticity of the so-called messages. I have never done any such thing." The Bishop stated that the so-called messages are contrary to Sacred Scripture and the Teachings of the Church. There are many discrepancies, contradictions and unfulfilled prophecies. Also in one example, the 'messages' speak of a second and a third(?) coming of the Lord.

"Furthermore, the medal promoted by the Little Pebble shows Our Blessed Lady with a Crown of 13 stars. Most of us should know, however, Chapter 12, verse 1 of the Book of the Apocalypse: 'And a great sign was seen in heaven, a

¹ Bishop Zanic of Mostar has condemned the happenings at Medjugorje, and they were also condemned by a Commission set up to decide the matter. This Commission found by 11 voices to 4 that the apparitions are not authentic. There are 35 Bishops in Yugoslavia, and only one, Archbishop Franjo, believes in them. A second Commission is now in progress (October 1990), initiated by the Bishops' Conference of Yugoslavia; yet, if they are faithful to their calling, the results cannot be but the same. A further Commission in 1991 issued a negative statement. Of 20 Bishops voting, 19 voted against. See also Appendix 'A'

woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars".

"Also, Mr Kamm has offered the world a new Scapular! His 'visionary' has told him to produce this Scapular of Atonement—this despite Canon Law which states specifically: 'Only the Apostolic See can establish new sacramentals, or authentically interpret, suppress or change existing ones'." (Canon 1167)

The promotion of the medal is also in defiance of Canon Law.

Originally Mr Kamm always stated in his 'messages' to his followers that he would "gladly accept the judgements of Holy Mother Church concerning his (Kamm's) messages". After his local Bishop publicly declared that his messages were not genuine, Mr Kamm continued his activities.

No Church Approval

On March 6, 1986, an article appeared in *The Catholic Weekly* (Sydney), written by Bishop Murray, publicly denouncing the activities of the 'Little Pebble' and his followers.

Among other things, the Bishop stated: "... I feel compelled to write to you on a matter that is a cause of serious unrest and disturbance to many people.

"It has come to my knowledge that many of you have received, and are still receiving written communications from a person describing himself as the 'Little Pebble'. He claims that these communications contain messages given to him by the Blessed Virgin Mary and even by Our Lord Himself.

"As there has been a growing concern on the part of people who have received these messages or have been disturbed by the conduct of people receiving them, I submitted the messages to expert theological examination. The theological advice resulting from this examination is that no supernatural significance can be attached to the messages issued by the person calling himself the 'Little Pebble'.

"Moreover the 'messages' fail completely when examined in the light of the criteria used by the Church for judging the authenticity of alleged supernatural phenomena. The findings are as follows:

1. First of all, they are not consistent with the Sacred Scriptures and the Church's official interpretation of God's Word.

2. Secondly, the 'messages' have been the cause of division in families and communities. I have received numerous reports to this effect. This is a certain sign that the 'messages' have not originated in Heaven.

3. Thirdly, rather than confirm people in their knowledge and love of God, the 'messages' stir up fear by concentrating upon the sensational, the unusual and upon fearsome predictions.

4. Fourthly, many of those who accepted the 'messages' are now acting in an eccentric manner and are a cause of disturbance to other members of Christ's faithful.

5. Fifthly, devotional practices called for in the 'messages' have neither any approval nor that of the parish priest in which they take place.

6. Sixthly, the 'messages' have been found to contain (a) contradictions; (b) unfulfilled prophecies and (c) condemnations of practices regarding the reception of Holy Communion that have been permitted by the Church founded by Christ and of which Mary is the Mother.

"While I am prepared to accept the possibility that the author of the 'messages' may be an innocent victim of self-deception and not one who sets out deliberately to mislead others, I must nevertheless insist that these 'messages' are not genuine and their contents should not be seriously heeded nor acted upon by the faithful.

"Nor should the faithful participate in any devotions promoted without ecclesiastical approval and in defiance of ecclesiastical authority by the person calling himself 'The Little Pebble'."

William E. Murray, Bishop of Wollongong.

In the same article in *The Catholic Weekly* it is stated: "The followers of 'The Little Pebble', mainly disenchanted Catholics, are known locally as the 'Marian Work of Atonement'."

The Marian Work of Atonement.

According to Kamm, the unofficial role of the Marian Work of Atonement is to warn the world of a second assassination attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II, followed by a revolution in Rome which will force the abdication of the Holy Father. World War Three will begin shortly after. (Part of this prophecy has been 'lifted' from other prophets of old, like many other prophecies mentioned in the 'messages')

According to the *The Little Pebble*, the activities of the Marian Work of Atonement are genuine.

"I am certainly not a charlatan", he said. "There will be fire in our bodies and souls, the fire of purgatory."

More recently, *The Little Pebble* has allegedly received "other fiery messages from Heaven" not directly linked to Our Lady.

In defiance of Bishop Murray's requests, *The Little Pebble* said he did not need the permission of the Church to pray.

In response, the Vatican did not question *The Little Pebble's* right to pray, but challenged his right to mislead and mis-inform genuinely pious Catholics.

Relations with the Vatican

In the *Little Pebble's* Newsletter No. 26, dated March 31, 1985 we read:

"This morning we went to the Holy Father's private Mass and had a private Audience with him that morning."

The facts are that William Kamm went to Rome in April 1985, expressly to pass on to the Pope "a message from Our Lady". He attended a private Mass by invitation along with around thirty other invitees. (He secured this invitation by passing a note to the Pope in a General Audience to the effect "that he had a message for the Pope from Our Lady". Out of curiosity the Pope issued him with an invitation.) It was NOT a private audience as stated by Mr Kamm on his return. He then stated that the Pope believes in him 100% and that the Pope will speak to many pilgrims about him. This suggests that the Pope agrees and approves of his work—which is not so.

In March 1986, Bishop Murray of Wollongong issued a Statement (*The Catholic Weekly*, March 5, 1986), received from the Vatican Secretariat via the Papal Pro-Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Barbaro:

"I ask you to inform Bishop Murray that during the month of April, Mr Kamm met the Holy Father on the occasion of a general Wednesday audience and took part with others of the faithful at the Mass in the Holy Father's private chapel.

"Nevertheless, he did not receive any approval of his alleged 'visions' on the part of the Holy Father.

"Consequently Mr Kamm has to submit himself to the jurisdiction of his Bishop and to all his directions, who, according to the Law of the Church, has the direct responsibility to judge and to exercise discipline in matters concerning alleged apparitions."

The Pope

It is most important that Mr Kamm receives Papal approval for his 'happenings' to bolster his credibility. As he was not able to obtain a private audience, he claims now he is experiencing 'bi-location' with the Pope who refuses to give his public approval, but does so privately by bi-location!

Likewise, regarding the Bishop, Mr Kamm claims that Our Lord Himself has told him "be not concerned with the Bishop's decree." Later, he stated that the Bishop "would receive a heavy penance for his lack of belief in the 'messages'." This was followed with further dire threats to the Bishop.

Mr Kamn also has 'visions' of being the Next Pope! He claims he will be elected as Pope Peter Romanus II, and has publicly stated this. (There are already no less than five 'Popes' around the world self-appointed by various groups attached to pseudo-visionaries!)

According to an audio tape of a talk by Mr Kamn, the 'Little Pebble' will take the place of John Paul II, Vicar of Christ, who will anoint William Kamn in May. Casaroli, the anti-Pope will be elected after John Paul II. Casaroli will go to Jerusalem on May 14, 1988. John Paul II will designate his successor (Kamn) when wounded! Needless to say, this did not happen.²

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, D.D.

In 1988 Mr Kamn's 'Lady' made the following statement: "Archbishop Lefebvre is a holy and beloved son of our Immaculate Hearts, but it is a matter of discipline and a matter of obedience." So we, according to his 'Lady' are to choose obedience rather than truth. Remember the words of St. Catherine of Siena to Pope Gregory XI: "Alas, Holy Father! There are times when those who obey . . . are heading for Hell." St. Catherine of Siena is a Doctor of the Church. The 'Lady' claims that "full obedience must be to the Vicar of Christ" — regardless of whether that obedience is lawful or not. We obey the Vicar of Christ in all things lawful and traditional but not in the abuse of law or abandonment of Tradition for novelty. This has been Church Teaching always. There have been many Popes in history who have abused their God-given authority, and St. Catherine of Siena had to point out that abuse to a Pope. Archbishop Lefebvre also many times has pointed out to recent Popes their abuse of authority and their abandonment of Tradition and their desecration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Mr Kamn's 'Lady' states: "Archbishop Lefebvre should go to the Pope and seek forgiveness for his actions" (!) Kamn and his 'Lady' do not understand the implications of such an action. They do not understand that it is Rome which must change and seek forgiveness for the millions of souls who are starving for bread instead of stones. As Cardinal Ratzinger himself tells us: "The 'Lefebvre Affair' does not exist by chance; it has been caused to exist by the situation in the Church." It exists because the highest authority in the Church has protected neither the Faith nor the faithful.

² William Kamn has now taken a second wife, (Bertrina) while his first wife (Ann) mother of his four children is still alive. He married the 17 year-old Bertrina on March 19, 1991, and now has two children by her. He claimed his first wife had lost her faith, and God had permitted him to take a second 'mystical' wife.

As Nicole Hall wrote recently: "It is not to Archbishop Lefebvre, nor to the rebel theologians, nor to arrogant hierarchies, but to the Seven Hills of Rome that the world's hungry sheep raise their eyes for a halt to the autodestruction so nearly complete of the Church of the Good Shepherd. May Peter yet be given the courage even at this eleventh hour to take the immediate and incisive action which is essential in order to save what remains of his Saviour's Church, and to this end seek the necessary grace by—offering himself the Immemorial Mass of the Church . . ."

"Because . . . the Vicar of Christ is also faced with a choice: 'Peter, lovest thou Me more than these?'" The Choice of Christianity" an article in *The Remnant*, May 15, 1990. It should be added that Catholics also have a choice: Obedience or Truth.

It is obvious to the discerning that Mr Kamn's 'Lady' is none other than the Angelic/Satanic Intelligence who seeks to deceive many souls.

According to Mr Kamn and his 'Lady', Pope John Paul II is the especially chosen Son of Our Lady. He carries favour with the Pope, hoping for approval of his locations, of his 'Lady'; of his Marian Work of Atonement, of his 'Scapular' of his 'Medal'; of his sacred grounds; of his succession to the Throne!

In the Extracts from 'Highlights of the Messages from Heaven' given to The Little Pebble, Book I, printed 1990, on page five we read: "Heaven does not condemn Bishop Lefebvre, nor does the Holy Father." Then who does?

Relation with other Seers

"I support Medjugorje 100% and pray for the seers." (The Little Pebble at Medjugorje September 22, 1987). Medjugorje has been condemned by the local Bishop and by a Commission set up to study the 'happenings'.

"Pray for the seers of Medjugorje, for they are undergoing a great trial for my Immaculate Heart." (page 36 of the above booklet.)

The 'Lady': "I wish to send my love and blessing to Fr Tomislav (Vlasic), the Spiritual Director of the seers of Medjugorje." (p. 40.)

"My children, I ask you to make an all-out effort to spread the messages of all apparition places and especially Necedah in the USA.

"Yes, I appear there, my children, even though the humble seer, Mary van Hoor has come to us in Paradise. Lift up your hearts, my children, and spread the message of Necedah.

"Come to my beloved place, Necedah, where my Divine Son and I have appeared many times". (p. 59)

In Newsletter No. 25 it is stated: "The apparition place that has recently joined us in unity is Necedah." (Wisconsin, USA).

(The alleged apparitions at Necedah were condemned on June 17, 1955 by Bishop J.P. Treacy of La Crosse. The condemnation was confirmed by Bishop F.W. Fekling in April of 1970 and reiterated an earlier warning issued by the Assessor of the Holy Office.

The seer of Necedah, Mary van Hoof, died in 1984, but the Shrine is as active as ever after 34 years, and still attracts new converts and has a solid base of hard-core believers behind its multimillion dollar operation. Since Mary Ann's death she is alleged to be appearing to various followers. A commune of approximately 70 families are living in the 'Shrine Belt'. Rosaries are supposed to be turning to gold, just as is supposedly happening at Medjugorje! Potential converts must be warned, pleads one ex-insider: "Once you're there it is too late; the Devil's goo gets on you and destroys your mind." Mary Ann's life is quite interesting and bizarre. According to Church records her mother, Elizabeth Bieher, ran a 'Spirit Cabin' in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where she acted as a medium on a regular basis. As a child, Mary Ann assisted her in seances. Her mother was the Vice-President of the Kenosha Assembly of Spiritualists. She had her first 'vision' in 1949. After that, the 'visions' were so frequent that it became just like Medjugorje is today. Thousands upon thousands flocked to the 'happenings' and hundreds of priests were also 'taken in'. The throngs became so great that Cardinal Strick had to step in and prohibit Catholics from his Diocese from attending. At one 'happening' a 'Miracle of the Sun' was promised which never eventuated. Despite warnings from Cardinal Ottaviani and Bishop Mulloy of Kentucky, Mary Ann and her followers continued to circumvent their orders.

When asked why she repeatedly disobeyed Church Authorities, even after promising to obey them, Mary Ann replied: "I am a free American citizen. This is my property, and I'll do as I wish." Mary Ann died in 1984 under an interdict issued by the Bishop. Mary Ann was not reconciled with the Church, nor did she wish to be.

Mary Ann's legacy lives on and in recent months, seems to have been gaining strength. All across the country mystics are reporting Mary Ann has told them she will appear at the shrine in April when the 'Little Pebble' comes to unite all the world's seers and their followers into one giant body of believers. (Above information from Fidelity USA, February 1989.)

So there it is. William Kamm, alias the 'Little Pebble', is in unity with the condemned 'happenings' of Necedah.

Bayside Connections

As mentioned earlier, Mr Kamm had already visited Bayside, no doubt to study its workings.

In his Newsletter No. 16: "We now know through the Bayside message that the Holy Father Pope Paul VI was a prisoner in the Vatican from 1972 onwards." Also in the 'Highlights of Messages' (p. 19) "My dear child, Veronica of Bayside is well aware of your mission."

Bayside would have to be the largest Catholic cult in the United States. It is called 'Our Lady of the Roses Shrine' or 'Bayside'. 64 year-old Veronica Leuken claims to have had visions since 1968.

As the cult grew, the Diocese of Brooklyn drove the movement out, and they set up at Flushing Meadow Park. This occurred in the mid 1970's. The Bishop of Brooklyn, Francis J. Mugavero, issued a statement against Bayside: "No credibility could be given to the so-called apparitions. The messages contain statements contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church."

A Commission was not held into the happenings for one very good reason. Msgr. Otto Garcia of the Brooklyn Diocese said that one need only read the messages to know that the apparitions are not worthy of belief. "First of all, the investigations were as thorough as it could be," the Bishop stated. "They (the Bayside group) deny there was a committee, but there was a committee with the former Chancellor. What they had were the texts and transcripts, plus the tapes from the vigils, the sources of the transcripts. Maybe it would have been inconclusive if the material had been sane. The Church goes to the next step in an investigation if the previous step is inconclusive." The Monsignor also had in his possession a copy of a book Veronica called: "The Rewriting of the Bible". "The moment you read the first page, you know this person is out of her mind", said Msgr. Garcia.

He continued: "If one reads the story of Guadalupe, Fatima or Lourdes, there are three things that are always present in these cases: obedience, humility and charity. I don't see them at Bayside."

The messages contain many doctrinal errors, one only of which has 'Our Lady' telling Veronica that humans were conceived by the Holy Ghost.

Our Lady would not be giving out messages contrary to Church Teaching and contrary to Church Law.

The Shrine reportedly has a mailing list of some 400,000 names and grosses an estimated \$5 million a year. While the cult grows, so do the victims.

Any attempt to leave the Bayside group leads to problems for the victims. "If you try to get out, you're damned." "If you leave us, you will go to Hell."

Bayside, as at Nowra, produced their own medal of Our Lady of the Roses, again without Church authority.

The cult symbol is a white beret for the men; a blue beret for the women.

It was at Bayside that William Kamn served his apprenticeship. Kamn left the Shrine and returned to Australia. "It's about time Australia had its own seer". Kamn's 'Little Pebble' is a shadow of Veronica, with the same 'apocalyptic' messages. He also has joined with 'The Trumpeter', a Texas man.

Who is Veronica Leukam? She was born Veronica Kamn in Queens, New York. As a young girl she yearned to be an actress. The family moved to Bayside, where Veronica supposedly had her first 'vision' in 1968. She supplemented the family income by reading fortunes and tarot cards.

Veronica called herself a 'voice-box' for Our Lady, and the occult uses the same terminology with the mediums the spirits use. Note also this 'voice-box' word is often used at Nowra.

There is also the phenomenon of Rosaries and Crucifixes allegedly turning to gold (as at Medjugorje.)

Medjugorje Connection

"I support Medjugorje 100% and pray for the seers at Medjugorje," said William Kamn on September 22, 1987.

"I wish to send my love and blessing to Fr. Tomislav (Vlasic), the spiritual director of the seers of Medjugorje." ('Highlights of Messages from Heaven' 1990, p. 40)

The Bishop of Mostar, Msgr. Zanic: "I appointed a Commission of 15 members. We made an exhaustive study of the question. We spoke to the seers on several occasions. When it came to the final vote, after 3 years of study, thirteen members of the Commission declared: "*Non satis constat de supernaturalitate apparitionum*". (There is insufficient proof of the supernatural character of the apparitions.) Only two declared "*Satis constat*". That decision was in 1986.

The Bishop's latest statement has not changed; this despite another Commission in progress.³ The Bishop says he could quote at least 20 reasons to not accept the supposed 'happenings'. Fifty-six 'miracles' at Medjugorje were presented to the 'Bureau Medical de Lourdes'. They were all rejected by the Bureau. One of the seers (Mirjana) told a deliberate lie under oath to Bishop Zanic. The Bishop had proof that Mirjana had a diary of the events but Mirjana denied the existence

³ Was not Bishop Zanic's Commission open and independent enough with its members chosen from seven different dioceses, four different provinces, and nine theological faculties?

of the diary. "All faiths are equal," according to the 'Lady' of Medjugorje. (This is not Catholic Dogma.) Bishop Zanic states: "Of the 100 diocesan priests in the dioceses of Herzegovina, not one believes in the apparitions. Of the 42 Bishops (Ordinaries, auxiliaries and retired), only one has been outspoken in declaring his belief and has defended the events.

"What have they done to Our Lady? For nine years they have been dragging you along like a tourist attraction! They have fabricated messages. The whole world has been expecting a 'great sign', and the naive still wait and believe. Unfortunately this false sensation will bring great disgrace and scandal upon the Church. There are many prayers and pious activities in Medjugorje. Some may there have been conversions as well. I have received, indeed, many truly touching letters, and I feel sorry for those who will sooner or later be disappointed. But there has also been fanaticism, superstition, and mis-information in the events of Medjugorje.

"I know there will be many sincerely pious souls that will misunderstand me and consider me an enemy of Our Lady. I have been to Lourdes many times and other (sites of) apparitions that the Church has recognized. What I am doing is defending the Truth, defending the Church.

"Those who have written books about Medjugorje have sold their books and have made great profits. Unfortunately, those who have written critically have not fared as well, because they have come across an organized boycott." So said Bishop Pavao Zanic, Bishop of Mostar.

And what of the followers?

"The Devil's power is immense in the sphere of extraordinary supernatural phenomena. With God's permission, the Devil has the power to disguise as 'an Angel of Light' and even appear under the outward form of Our Lord or Our Lady, as he did at Lourdes to about fifty seers after the genuine apparitions to Bernadette. The Devil can also work all sorts of wonders and deceptions, speaking in tongues. Despite all this, these deceptions will always have "something unworthy of God, something ridiculous, extravagant, disorderly or unreasonable about them. (Mystical Phenomena, Lethellman, 1923).

"Deception can sometimes go very far, and counterfeit apparitions can present striking resemblances with authentic Divine manifestations. Church history has many examples. For instance, in the 16th century there was Madelane de la Croix, the Franciscan nun of Cordova, dedicated to the Devil from infancy, who, for 30 years, deceived the greatest theologians, Bishops and Cardinals. She had a reputation as a Prophet, as a holy person and as a miracle worker. She spoke continuously of the need to do penance. On the strength of this, people flocked to

the Sacraments. She was unmasked by Blessed Acarie, who proved without doubt that the Devil was the author of everything extraordinary about her, and that he could lose a little in order to gain much. (Madame Acarie by J.B. Boucher from *History of Religious Sentiment* pp. 69-71.)

Also Nicole Tavernier of Paris worked miracles and foresold the future until she was unmasked.

"I only regard a revelation as true if it is in no way contrary to Holy Scripture and to the Laws of the Church, which we are obliged to follow." St. Teresa of Avila.

It is wise to keep only to those apparitions canonically recognized by the Church as for example, La Salette, Lourdes and Fatima, this latter, being a re-capitulation of them all, and the faithful should serenely await the hour when Fatima will glorify the Church!

Medjugorje, Necedah, Bayside and Nowa diabolically substitute Fatima's authentic and salutary prophetic messages with modern apostasy under its latest form, that of Pentecostalism and Charismatic antics, even more dangerous for the Catholic Faith than the Protestant and Modernist heresy from which they flow. Medjugorje is a blatant outbidding of Fatima!

Souls are oftentimes deceived with respect to locutions and revelations that come from God, because they interpret them according to their apparent sense and literally; whereas, as has already been explained, the principal intention of God, in giving these things is to express and convey the spirit that is contained in them, which is difficult to understand. (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Chapter 24).

The advice of St. John of the Cross advises us to neither receive nor give credit to revelations relating to different things: "...wherein the devil habitually meddles so freely that I believe it impossible for a man not to be deceived in many of them unless he strive to reject them, such an appearance of truth and security does the devil give them?" (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Chapter 27)

There are many Catholics today who lean too heavily on private revelations which claim to come directly from Heaven—information many people feel they need in order to cope with today's uncertainties. These revelations operate outside the divinely instituted order and control of the Church.

"Seeking after visions and revelations and especially being attached to them and building one's spiritual life upon them is also a form of neo-Gnosticism because it is seeking salvation in knowledge gained in ways essentially outside the order of divine public revelation, of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, especially Faith.

"Many people have great difficulty understanding why it is that visions and other miraculous events, such as bleeding hosts, weeping statues, etc. are not important to the spiritual life; are not part of its existence and substance. It is because while such things may help a person's faith when it is weak and may lead one on to a greater striving in the way of perfection, still, such things do not belong to the theological virtues of which God Himself is the object." (*Revelations and the Church* by Laurent Volkon)

If one follows these revelations there is a danger lest we become attached to visions to the great detriment of our progress in the way of faith which alone can unite our mind directly to God, and the danger of being deluded owing to the multiple occasions of error furnished by visions.

Guidance and the Will of God

Everything we need in the way of guidance is contained in Faith, in Scripture, in the Church's Teachings and in our own properly enlightened reason. It is so easy today to be guided by our own will, as so many today are so guided, rather than by the Will of God. Therefore to place one's confidence and joy in visions and revelations is to depart from the narrow way of Faith, and those who follow apparitions instead of reason and Catholic Faith, dogmatically defined by previous Popes and Councils, are falling into the Gnostic temptation of seeking knowledge outside the Will of God.

As St. John of the Cross says: "This power of the evil spirit reaches very far. He can foretell pestilence, earthquakes, divine punishments, death; all with at least a high degree of probability. From the fact that sometimes the predictions are actually fulfilled, however, we must not hold that their divine origin is thereby proved. Often such are nothing but diabolical divination." (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book 2, Chapter 21.)

A Traditional priest gave this good advice: "In our post-Conciliar era, Satan is really busy sifting the Hierarchy, clergy and laity. Millions have fallen away from the true Faith. None of us mortal people are free from the tricks, temptations and allurements of Satan. In order to save ourselves from falling into his trap, we have to be alert and use traditional means of salvation. St. Peter had his reason when he warned his disciples: 'Brethren, be sober, be watchful, for your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion goes about seeking someone to devour. Resist him steadfast in the Faith'." (1 Peter. 5:8-9)

Let us hear what Fr. Jean Violeux has to say regarding private revelations. Fr. Violeux has studied this phenomenon of our times, when so many well-meaning Catholics are "hooked" on these pseudo-mystics. He gives some excellent advice

in which one may take heed and not fall into the enemy's cunning trap. It is better to be safe now than sorry later!"

What the Catholic Church teaches.

"The warning given by Our Lord to His Apostles to beware of false prophets and that at the end of time there will be many false Christs and false prophets, almost seems to have been given for our times. Indeed, if we look at all the supposedly heavenly messages being given from all corners of the world, by so many people, so often and for such a long period of time, we cannot but be suspicious. Yugoslavia (Medjugorje), New York (Bayside and Flushing Meadows), Necedah, Australia (The Little Pebble at Nowra) plus France and many other places.

"We will limit ourselves to giving the traditional teaching on apparitions.

Divine Revelation.

"Divine Revelation is the revelation of God to men of certain truths which are hidden from them. There can be two reasons for these revelations:

1. Either they are for the good of the whole Church. In this case it is called Public Revelation, or
2. It can be for the good of one or many individuals. In this second case it is called Private Revelation.

Public Revelation.

"Public revelation concerns the Church and reveals to all men that which is necessary for salvation. Public revelation is also called 'The Deposit of Faith', and it contains both Holy Scripture and Tradition, which have been entrusted to the Catholic Church for interpretation. This is the Catholic Faith which must be believed by all men in order to be saved.

"Christ entrusted His revelation to His Apostles who had the duty to reveal it to the rest of humanity and interpret it. And so with the death of St. John, the last of the Apostles, the public revelation ceased, ended, closed. All that is necessary for salvation has been revealed and there is nothing else to be added.

Private Revelation.

"Private revelations, on the other hand, have been made in every age of humanity." Holy Scripture and the lives of the Saints give us enough proof of this fact. However, these revelations do not form part of the Deposit of Faith and therefore, are not part of the Catholic faith. Hence there is no obligation to believe them. Even when the Church approves them, She does not make them an object of Catholic Faith, but, as Pope Benedict XIV said:

"She simply permits them to be published for the instruction and the edification of the faithful. The assent to be given to them is not therefore an act of Catholic Faith but of human faith, based upon the fact that these revelations are probable and worthy of credence.

"St. John of the Cross asserts that the desire for revelations deprives faith of its purity, develops a dangerous curiosity which becomes a source of illusions, fills the mind with vain fancies and often proves the want of humility, and of submission to Our Lord, Who, through His public revelation, has given us what is

"We must suspect those apparitions that lack dignity or proper reserve and above all, those that are ridiculous. This last characteristic is a mark of human or diabolical machination." (Pseudo-mystic followers should note well this last sentence.)

Rules concerning the effects of Revelations.

"A tree is judged by its fruits: hence, we can judge revelations by the effects they produce in the soul.

1. According to St. Ignatius and St. Teresa, a divine vision causes at first a sense of wonderment and fear, soon to be followed by a sense of deep and lasting peace, of joy and security. The contrary is true with regard to diabolical visions; if at the outset they produce joy, they soon cause uneasiness, sadness and discouragement. It is thus that the devil brings about the downfall of souls.

2. True revelations strengthen the soul in humility, obedience, patience, and conformity to the Divine Will; false ones beget pride, presumption and disobedience.

Principal causes of errors in revelations

1. The message itself can be misinterpreted by the seer either because of the obscurity of the message or itself, or, because God Himself only makes it

4 Fr. Volterra is a Traditional priest and scholar of private revelations, who has written numerous articles in the Mary faithful, a journal published in the United States

partially intelligible, or because there is a condition which is understood for the fulfilment of the message.

2. When a vision shows an historical event, for example the life and death of Christ, it usually does so only in an approximate and probable manner without warning the seer.

3. It can happen that during a vision the human intellect is able to mingle in a certain manner with the Divine action.

4. It is possible that a true vision may be unwittingly altered by the seer himself when he attempts to explain.

5. Revelations can be altered by those to whom the messages are dictated to.

(An example was when Our Lord appeared to St. Francis of Assisi and told him to "go repair My Church." Immediately St. Francis set about repairing his local church which was in bad repair. But Our Lord later appeared and mentioned to him that it was the condition of the Church Militant that was in need of repair!)

"Also many predictions are conditional. (This rule is often used by pseudomystics to explain unfulfilled prophecies.)

"St. Norbert affirmed that he knew through revelation and with certainty that the Anti-christ would come in his generation. (12th century) Questioned closely by St. Bernard, he said that as long as he would not die before seeing a general persecution of the Church. St. Vincent Ferrer announced for 21 years the Last Judgement was nigh, and seemed to confirm this prediction by miracles. This can be explained by saying that his prediction was conditional.

"The Great Western Schism would have marked the end of the world but because of the many conversions brought about by the Saint's great miracles, it was averted. The same is true in the case of the message of Fatima. The great punishment is conditional upon whether or not men will convert. Unfortunately, the message of Fatima is not accepted in the same way as was that of St. Vincent." (End of quotes from Fr. Violetta.)

Our attitude towards Private Revelations.

We cannot do better than to imitate the judicious reserve of the Church and of the Saints.

St. Teresa says: "Sometimes, and often, it may only be fancy especially if the persons have a weak imagination, or are subject to great melancholy. No attention is, in my opinion, to be paid to these two kinds of persons. Such things are always to be feared until the spirit is understood."

Fr. Tiquerey has this to say to any seer: "As to the seers themselves, they have but one rule to follow, to make their revelations known to some prudent director, and humbly follow his instructions. This is the surest way of not going astray."

A Traditional priest says: "Should we yearn for private revelations? Our Lord has never recommended that we should, and He has good reason for that. Satan can use so-called 'apparitions' to seduce pious people who carry in their soul the fatal virus of pride.

"The easiest prey for Satan are those person who are yearning for special revelations. The hidden thought in their souls tells them that Public Revelation is truly for everybody, but they are not just everybody—they are special, chosen souls entitled to special treatment by God. These are people who eagerly accept new ideas.

"Satan's greatest success in our days is the subversion of the Catholic Church, and bringing forth the 'Conciliar Church'. He achieved this unbelievable victory by entrapping both the intellectual and the simple Catholics with new ideas! He induced the intellectuals to accept science as the source of Faith rather than Revelation. Thus the way was paved for the Modernist Heresy.

"On the other hand, millions of simple, pious people have been led into error by the so-called recent 'apparitions'. In our day these private revelations have proliferated so much that it is safe to assume that (at least) some of them are nothing else than clever traps of Satan who appears there "as the angel of light", (2 Cor. 11:14) or "gives himself out as if he were God." (2 Thess. 2:4).

"Satan satisfied the desire for new ideas in the minds of intellectuals by offering them the errors of Modernism. The desire of simple Catholic people was satisfied with the proliferation of new apparitions, new devotions. Both classes of people have detached themselves from the Rock, from the Cornerstone, (Luke 20:18) from the Sacred Tradition of the Church: thus, they give an opening to the allurements of Satan. As long as we stand on the ground of Sacred Traditions, Satan cannot easily push us around.

Signs of apparitions not genuine?

"Firstly, those apparitions come under suspicion which advertise in Newsletters. The true Mystic of the Church never rushes into publicity: rather, they try to conceal their extraordinary gift, and come out in public only through obedience to their Superiors.

"In times of crisis and tribulations we hear more about apparitions than in peaceful times. Regarding these we should not forget the warning of Our Lord.

He said: "Then if anyone say to you, Behold here is the Christ, or There he is, do not believe it. False Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. If therefore they say to you, Behold, he is in the desert, do not go forth, or behold, he is in the inner chambers, do not believe it. For, as the lightning comes from the east and shines even to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt. 24-24-27).

'In view of this divine instruction we can say it is wrong to rush to the scene of every alleged apparitions, and to put your unreserved faith in the 'on-going' visions and instructions of the seer.

'You might have an objection, saying how can we be wrong when the seer conveys to us the most appealing words of the Blessed Virgin Mary asking for certain prayers and devotions? Satan would not ask us to pray. Would he?

'Yes he would. And he would employ every means which might serve his purpose. Remember when he was tempting the Lord in the desert, he was using the words of Holy Scripture—of course with the wrong interpretation.

'Jesus refused to fall into the trap of Satan. But how can a simple unsuspecting Catholic discern if there is something wrong behind the pious instructions of a private revelation? It is not easy to discern especially if this pious Catholic is eagerly waiting at the scene, as a member of the crowd, to witness some possible miracle or 'sign'.

'The Pharisees of old were demanding signs from Christ. Master we would see a sign from Thee. But He answered and said to them: An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, and no sign shall be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. (Matt. 12:38-39) Jesus was referring to His own death and resurrection.

Christ's resurrection should forever satisfy the need of a human soul to have a solid foundation for his faith in the divinity of Christ. There is no need to rush to the scene of every new 'apparition'. The words of Jesus addressed to Thomas the Apostle contain instruction for us too. 'Because you have seen Me Thomas, you have believed. Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed.' (Jn.20:29)

'Examining the messages of the seers, experience shows that most of the time one cannot find fault with the instructions of the seer when he (or she) recommends some prayers or devotions. If a certain apparition is not from God, this fact is well disguised by pious utterances. The poison is usually hidden in those things which the seer does not mention. For example, when the instruction of the seer emphasises new devotions, you will be tempted to forget the old and approved devotions

and the performance of your daily duties. As someone frankly put it. It is easier to pray than to work'.

'When I am reading an assertion on how effective this or that kind of new Rosary is, this or that variation of the Hail Mary or Our Father. I ask the question: 'What is wrong with the old one? Shall we Catholics learn new prayers (let's say) every ten years? Shall we forget St. Paul's admonition. 'Hold fast to the Traditions'?"

'In our days, a Hungarian seer, among other things, is recommending fasting on bread and water for certain days in order to liberate souls from Purgatory. Fasting has always been recommended by Jesus and His Church. But the Church has never required us to attach specific and definite results to our fasting, like liberating a soul, or (in November) ten souls, for one day of fasting, or with one Hail Mary, if we say it, referring to the Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

(Fasting reminds the writer of a statement made to Blessed Anna Maria Taigi (1769-1837): "My daughter, spiritual profit consists neither in penance, nor in the frequentation of the Sacraments, say, not even in sheding sorrow for sin, but in the union of your will with Mine. Those who wish to follow My way must renounce their own will everywhere and in all things. Do what you do not wish to do; leave undone what you wish to do. one act of violence to oneself of this kind is much more pleasing to Me than an entire year of penance.")

'Thanks to the goodness of God, we have already received several tools, means, messages in the Public Revelation and in the approved private ones (Ourdes, Fatima, etc.) which teach us how to save our souls, how to pray for the conversion of sinners, how to save the world from satanic enslavement. And these teachings and devotions are now obsolete? Shall we turn to new ones?

'Of course, Vatican II does not help the situation. Was not the slogan of Vatican II 'Renewal', 'Aggravamento', 'New Dimensions in doctrine, new Mass, new Eucharist?' Have we not seen by this time, the unbelievable damage for the Church and souls caused by these new ideas?"

This brings us to an evaluation of Pope Paul VI, who supervised the "auto-destruction" of our beloved Church. The facts of history have rather justified Archbishop Lefebvre in his evaluation of Pope Paul VI, when he wrote: 'One must recognize that the Pontificate of Pope Paul VI posed, and continues to pose, a serious problem of conscience for the faithful. Without reference to his culpability for the terrible demolition of the Church which took place under his pontificate, one cannot but recognize that he hastened the causes of that decline in every domain. One can fairly ask oneself how it was possible that a successor of

St. Peter could in so little time, have caused more damage to the Church than the French Revolution."

Of course, we all know, or should know, that Paul VI and John XXIII abolished Tradition in favour of Innovation and Novelty. Vatican II rejected Tradition and introduced 'new changes' to satisfy Modern Man and our Eccumenical Brethren who are all striving for a One World Church!

Regarding apparitions, Archbishop Lefebvre has this to say: "There is a great danger which is infiltrating, it must be said, even in the midst of our traditionalist circles. It is the apparitions. A person says that she has some contacts, some special relations with heaven and behold, everyone runs in order to hear this person. There is a great danger there. I think we are at that epoch to which Our Lord alluded: At the end of time, they will say to you, Christ is here. He is in the desert. He is in the mountains. He is in the sea, here or there. Do not go there", said Our Lord.

"Bernadette herself was tempted by the devil. But, thanks precisely to the Parish Priest of Lourdes and to the Bishop who was on the lookout, she did not succumb to the temptation. That proves that the devil can intervene. Let us not encourage, then, our faithful to go on these pilgrimages when they have not been recognised as authentic by the Church.

Our Lord instituted the Sacraments in order to sanctify us. If there are some true apparitions, they cannot but be secondary. They cannot but confirm the Sacraments. Let us pray, let us have then faith in that which Our Lord Himself has given us with the Sacraments, with the Mass, with all the Truths that He has taught us by the Holy Church. We have all that is necessary in order to go to Heaven."

Finally, it is well to bear in mind that only three of the hundreds of reputed apparitions of Our Lady in the Twentieth Century have received 'the universal judgement by proper ecclesiastical authorities, that each of these apparitions is valid.' These are Fatima in Portugal (1917), Beaurain in Belgium (1932-33) and Banneux also in Belgium (1933).

Reverend William Walsh wrote an article in the April 1986 issue of Catholic, which was subsequently published in pamphlet form, entitled 'Traditional Teaching on Apparitions.' Some lengthy extracts are reproduced below:

"The world today is being besieged by claims of heavenly apparitions as it has never been besieged before. From Garabandal, Spain to San Damiano, Italy, from Bayside, New York, to the Little Pebble here in Australia. There are literally hundreds of alleged visions and happenings world-wide. Nor are the seers content with simple one or two line messages. Moreover, the people who

follow these apparitions have developed a devotion, an avidity for these and future messages, which easily stands out as the chief characteristic of their spiritual life. The slightest doubts expressed in their presence about the truth or holiness of these supposed heavenly manifestations will immediately raise an emotional furor difficult to ever completely pacify.

"In an age when devotions to science fiction, eastern mysticism, use of hallucinogenic drugs, and occult para-psychology are running rampant, it really should be no surprise that modernist Catholics (who desire to be relevant) would want to indulge in the possibility of current supernatural phenomena that is 'Catholic-oriented.' But when Catholics, who purport to hold fast to the traditional teachings of the Church in a world gone mad, when there are the ones who are wholeheartedly and unquestionably embracing the validity of these visitations, one wonders if they truly understand the responsibility that corresponds to the name Catholic: the responsibility that is, of upholding the traditional teachings of the Church on private revelation, visions, and locutions. Apart from the authenticity of the apparitions themselves, the very attitude of these Catholics in their approach to apparitions must be questioned. Why, one must ask, are the traditional teachings of the Church being ignored?

'All Catholic theologians concur that private revelations, visions, and locutions must be approached with great caution, always keeping in mind the strong possibility of human illusion, self-deception, diabolical influence, and even outright fraud.

"In spite of the abundance of such warnings found in the treatises on mysticism written by St. John of the Cross and devotees of contemporary seers who have never entertained the slightest doubt about the authenticity of modern-day apparitions, St. Teresa, who climbed through all the mazes of the contemporary life, often exercised caution and doubt about the authenticity of the visions and voices she herself experienced. But not the adepts of our day. They are certain that their "voices" are truly divine. No need to follow the traditional teaching

The Latest News from Heaven

"A further scandal in this regard is the sight of Catholics passing out literature and messages from various contemporary apparitions sites. The printing presses roll all around the apparitions sites as soon as the seer claims to have heard or seen anything new. And the devotees are all too eager to disseminate the latest news from Heaven. The rule given by St. Teresa is that a seer should tell no one but her spiritual director about her supposed locutions, and then he is to be all-careful

in seeing that only the proper ecclesiastical authorities examine and pass judgments on the case. Not so with the seers of our day. Messages and prophecies are published without permission and without reserve.

"When confronted with the traditional revelations, some Catholics will respond: 'Oh, haven't you heard?' Pope Paul VI revoked that legislation. Now it's all right to publish these messages."

Laws Contrary to Tradition

"For 350 years, since the decree of Pope Urban VIII in 1625, the Church has severely forbidden any publication of accounts of private revelation and visions without special ecclesiastical approbation. The reasons are those cited above in the works of St. John of the Cross and Pope Benedict XIV. The decree of Pope Urban VIII went so far as to impose on all a great reserve even in private conversation relative to supernatural facts which are not very authentic. Thus, the Christian people were protected from the dangers inherent in 'apparition enthusiasm': dangers of attachment, curiosity, delusion, etc. Above all, these laws enshrine the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church on exercising judicious reserve with respect to all reports of private revelation. It is incredible that a Catholic would ignore all this with the statement, 'It's only a disciplinary decree. Popes can change those kinds of laws.'"

"Wherever a change in disciplinary law causes a danger to faith or morals, Catholics should recognize this as an abuse of authority, and retain the old practices, holding fast to tradition. Such is the case with Communion in the hand or the elimination of the priest's obligation to recite the liturgy. Catholics who truly understand what it means to uphold Catholic Tradition in every respect of life will never publish, read, or pass on any accounts of alleged visions or supernatural messages. He or she will prefer to follow the good and saintly Popes for the last 350 years rather than any recent liberal one who has passed laws contrary to Tradition."

"Finally it is imperative to insist on the great harm done to the spiritual life by all such curiosity, enthusiasm, and attachment to apparitions."

Desire for Revelations

It is absolutely necessary for Catholic priests everywhere to take up the writings of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila and warn their flocks against this grave error of our time. In his *Three Ages of the Interior Life* (Ch. 5-7), Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange lists the evil effects of having a desire for revelations as at least a virtual sin, even when the soul has a good end in view. He writes:

"St. John of the Cross strongly reproves the desire for revelations. On this point he is in complete accord with St. Vincent Ferrer, and shows that the soul desiring revelations is vain, that by this curiosity it gives the devil the opportunity to lead it astray; that this inclination takes away the purity of faith, produces a hindrance for the spirit, denotes a lack of humility, and exposes it to many errors."

All this clearly shows the error of imprudent directors who, impelled by curiosity, are concerned with souls favoured by visions and revelations. This curiosity is a deformation of spirit which casts the soul into illusion and trouble, and turns it away from humility through vain complacency in extraordinary ways.

"Sad to say in our day not only seers but large numbers of ordinary lay people are violating these rules by their curiosity and avidity for hearing. 'What Our Lady said.''' Indeed some apparition sites are turning into oracles in that large numbers of the people are frequenting them and turning to them as the surest source on earth for knowing God's Will. Such a pagan practice is unheard of in the history of Christianity. Jesus Christ established a visible Church and said to the Apostles, and through them to their successors, the bishops, 'He who hears you, hears Me.' If Catholics try to replace that Magisterium with oracles, they will be inviting Satan to ruin their lives. St. John of the Cross concludes his chapter on this subject with the following:

"The devil rejoices greatly when a soul seeks after revelations and is ready to accept them; for such conduct furnishes him with many opportunities of instilling delusions, and derogating from the Faith as much as he possibly can, for such a soul becomes rough and rude, and falls frequently into many temptations and unbecomely habits. (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book 2, Chapter 13.)

"Catholics must remain attached, not to oracles as the pagan Romans and Greeks, but to Catholic Rome—the 2,000 years of teaching under an infallible Magisterium established by Jesus Christ. We can never go back to the darkness of Delphi."

(*End of extracts from Fr. Weisk's article.*)

Followers of Bayuda, the Little Pebble, Necedah and other similar cults are acting against Church authority and teaching. They are obsessed with prophecy and End Times events.

There is now in the United States of America, disciples of the Thomas Merton School practicing Eastern Mysticism; we have Fr. Matthew Fox promising the Pantheistic New Age of Aquinas; we have Christmatics who speak in tongues, who have 'healing sessions' and have captivated even many Religious yearning for deliverance from the yoke of their vows and seeking, in their pride, some recognition.

Incredibly, all are drawing a huge following from all walks of life.

There are now thousands of destructive cults throughout the world. Most fall under the spell of a captivating personality "who favours himself a mystic with inside information, and with a 'holiness to heaven' ". As Mariene Moloney, in her *The Battle for the Mystical Mind* says: "The blind devotee gives allegiance to a master who he feels has special illumination and wisdom that can't be doubted and puts him above all other authorities. Because he has usually lost the ability to think for himself, (or herself) the victim typically exhibits uncritical acceptance of everything his or her Guru says or does as a truth beyond criticism or investigation. He thus refuses to listen to or accept opposing views regardless of their obvious validity

Altered State of Consciousness (ASC)

Cult leaders unknowingly, or even purposely, induce this hypnotic condition in their disciples by stirring up the intense nervous excitement and powerful emotions needed to produce an altered state of consciousness (ASC).

"From Simon Magus to such 20th century spellbinders as Jim Jones and Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, these mesmerists have opened the door of man's mind to demonic invasion.

"For the gullible believer, their practices are cleverly disguised. On the other hand, mystical revelations can deceive even the leader himself. This is undoubtedly true for many of the new seers sprouting up all over the world.

"The Necedah visionary Mary Ann Van Hoof was just such a charismatic cult leader. Many of the prophets now in vogue, including Veronica Lewken and the Little Pebbie, have ties to Necedah.

Mary Ann Van Hoof of Necedah, (now deceased) was supposed to appear to a large gathering in Necedah in the (Northern) spring of 1989. Then the Little Pebbie was going to unite all the world's seers and their disciples into one giant body of believers (led of course, by the Little Pebbie), that will save the Church from its heresy. All of this is not surprising. It is no secret that when humans play the devil's game, he will soon take control of the ball.

"Van Hoof (and other seers), claim that the Blessed Mother and the saints used her vocal chords to deliver public messages. Such access to the blessed 'voice box', if authentic, can only be gained through possession.

Scripture teaches that summoning the dead is forbidden by God. (Mr. Duffy, a follower of Mr. Kamm, the 'Little Pebbie', lost his son, Grant, in 1984. According to Kamm, Grant will rise from the dead "soon".) Moreover, theologians agree that normally the dead cannot communicate with persons still living on earth. In

any event, they cannot be at the summons of mediums. Since the Bible also warns that divination and necromancy (dealings with the dead) are expressly forbidden by God, no holy soul would answer the summons of a medium. Consequently, critics who respond to the call of the medium can only be rebellious evil spirits masquerading as souls of the dead.

In his book *Spiritistic Facts and Frauds*, Fr. S.A. Blackmore explains it this way:

"The superior mind of the fallen angels enables them to perceive the character of each mortal, his religious beliefs, inclinations and passions good and bad, and, as a consequence, to accommodate themselves to the particular condition of each intended victim. If, however, he be a man of a religious mind and of good morals, they begin with an approval of his religion and his virtues, and having won his confidence, labour by insinuations, half-truths and sophistries to win by degrees to their own evil purposes. Many an example is on record where Christians, from failure to observe these guiding principles, have been seduced from the Path, as well as from moral rectitude.

"As an open assault might repel them and so endanger success, they proceed slowly and cautiously, gradually suggesting and cunningly insinuating thoughts against the essentials of their Christian faith. By frequent communications, doubts are in time engendered, which, at the wily urgings of these masquerading agencies, are made to appear, especially to the less well instructed, as overwhelming and unanswerable."

Craving for the marvellous and the sensational.

The desire to know the unknown, especially the future, is almost irresistible for many people. Any kind of disclosure however, says Fr. Blackmore, can come only from God, and He has not ordained that man ordinarily can know hidden

The Catholic Encyclopedia warns: "One should be aware of over eagerness for extraordinary facts. A craving for the marvellous and the sensational is not in keeping with the mind of the Church. It exposes one to the danger of not heeding her decisions in these matters, although she has the right and the duty to judge of their nature and truth.

"Such eagerness for the marvellous must not be mistaken for a sign of a true Catholic spirit, which lies in following the Church's official guidance. Nor is there any need for one to desire these charismatic graces for himself. A desire for private revelations is generally unhealthy and, as history shows, leads to pitiful or disastrous deviations.

"The quest for the supernatural is epidemic. The inherent human yearning for the supernatural along with curiosity about the future can delude even the most sincere Christian. The Holy Ghost can indeed work miracles, but there isn't just one spirit operating in the world. And when the door to the mind is left purposefully open, there is no guarantee which spirit will answer the invitation. Since the Bible expressly forbids divination and necromancy, the visitor more than likely will be Satan or one of his minions disguised as an angel of light.

"The only resort for the confused pilgrim is to follow Peter and cling to the Faith his Church safeguarded and passed on in its entirety. Jesus was not naive. Since He knew the ambiguities of man, He would not have left His people without a competent leader. Consequently, He left His Church. Only by following this One, True, Catholic and Apostolic Traditional Church can we be assured that we are following Christ."

Experts in Theology of Mystics.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia: "The theology of private revelations and the Church's approval provides clear pastoral guidance for the faithful. Their attitude should be the same as that of the Church. First, it should be one of caution, of awareness that illusion and error easily enter into the workings of even genuine and approved mystics and saints. To sift the wheat from the chaff is a delicate task better left to experts in theology and psychology of mystics. When reading books of revelations or reports on visions and apparitions, the wise rule is not to draw on them for spiritual guidance, unless it be something the Church has approved and teaches independently of them. What is singular and out of keeping with the common teaching of spiritual and theological writers must inspire caution and distrust as also what tends to satisfy unnecessary curiosity for example, information about details of the Passion or about future events."

From 'Necedah Revisted—Anatomy of a phony Apparition' by Marlene Moloney: "The Parish priest of Necedah, Fr. Michael Mertens, called obedience to legitimate authority of the Church the most important consideration in discernment. He stressed the fundamental principle that guides the Church and its members is obedience to the lawful pastor—to them alone Christ has entrusted the discernment of spirits and evaluations of claims of any alleged seers claiming private revelations, and we can know the authenticity of these things only by the definition of authority, there is no other way."

Finally a few passages from Fr. Gabriel's book *Visions and Revelations in the Spiritual Life*:

"St. John of the Cross has admirably shown how the way that leads to sanctity, and that the highest, to union with God and to that pure love which is more profitable to Holy Church than all external works, is the way of Faith, which consists in the ever more perfect practice of the theological virtues.

"Too many souls still dream about 'extraordinary ways' and 'special missions'. Often this is because they have never grasped the depths of beauty of the life of supernatural grace, never realized the grandeur of the mission that belongs to every contemplative soul. Their self-centredness is the result of their ignorance, unless it arise—which is still worse—from a hidden spiritual conceit that is not content to walk the beaten path trodden by others.

"According to the great mystical Doctor, Satan cannot touch the soul once it has severed the bonds which attach it to the material world. When the gates of the senses have been shut and the mystic plunges into the Night of the Senses in order to cleave more closely to God, the devil cannot touch him, for he cannot even know what is now happening in the soul."

"The author of the *Averil of Mount Carmel* warns us against the danger of accepting external visions, internal representation, emotions, all that mechanism of the perceptible—in fact, which to one of good will may appear to be the means of reaching the highest peaks of the religious life, whereas in fact, it diverts us from them.

"The Devil is indeed 'God's Ape', and the better to oppose God's work in the soul, he begins by counterfeiting that work by artifice. And so, according to the teaching of St. John of the Cross, the devil is far less to be feared in the so-called external manifestations than in the underground influence he exerts in souls which are not sufficiently instructed or well-tempered." *Visions and Revelations of the Spiritual Life*.

A final note regarding Satan 'working miracles'

It is well known that the Fallen Angels have lost their original beauty and goodness, but not their powers. They can affect the elements, and also perform *apparent* miracles. Only God can perform a true and *real* miracle. Antichrist will not work *real* miracles, but only false and apparent ones. It is said that Antichrist will make the sun stand still, walk on the sea and move mountains. These marvels will all be illusions and mirages. Satan and his fallen angels will cause imagination and sight to observe making objects seem different to what they are. This has already been observed at the sites of many false apparitions—such as objects seen in the sky, the sun performing erratically, and other unnatural things.

Appendix A

The Truth About Medjugorje

*Excerpts from a statement made by His Lordship, Petar Zanic
Bishop of Mostar, 1990.*

*(Below are extracts from a lengthy statement made by the now retired Bishop of Mostar, the Diocese in which Medjugorje is located. The section numbers are retained to indicate the continuity of the statement. Where sections are not reproduced in full, the symbol *** appears.)*

1 The truth regarding the events in Medjugorje is being brought out by a Commission of the Bishops' Conference of Yugoslavia (BCKJ). Their work though, is progressing slowly. Therefore with this statement I wish to help the Commission in coming to a decision as soon as possible. Propaganda in favour of Medjugorje is being rushed in order to place the Church and the world before a *fait accompli*. This has been the intention of the defenders of Medjugorje from the beginning. It must be admitted that they have succeeded, because the other side is either working too slowly or remaining silent. For these reasons and due to the conviction that I have been given from many from all over the world who realize the truth has been trampled upon, I have decided to make another statement according to my duty and conscience and help the Commission. With this statement I wish to awaken the consciences of those who defend Medjugorje. Their path is simple, wide and downhill all the way while mine is difficult, thorny and uphill. The Church and Our Lady have no need of falsehoods. Jesus says: "The truth will make you free." (Jn. 8:32) "I am the way and the truth and the life," (Jn. 14:6) For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth, hears my voice. (Jn. 18:37) For a short description of the falsehoods about Medjugorje we would need about 200 pages, but for now all I will give is this short summary without a scientific approach. I am somewhat uneasy because of the fact that in some statements my name is in the forefront, yet from the beginning of the 'apparitions' I have been in the centre of the events due to my episcopal position and duties. I am sorry in vain for having to mention some 'unpleasant things', but without them the arguments lose their strength. However the most unpleasant things will be left out.

2 A Characteristic Attitude: Marina B., a tourist guide for Atlas Travel brought a priest from Panama to my office in August 1989. His name was Father Rodriguez Teofilopastor of Nuestra Señora de Lourdes. With him came Carmen Capriles—a journalist, Gerente General of the IATA agency, and Avenida Alberio Navarro, Apartado 1344 Zona 7 Panama. Marina presented herself as a tour guide, translator for English and a convert of Medjugorje. The priest asked me for the reasons why I do not believe in the 'apparitions'. I told him that I have at least twenty reasons not to believe, of which only one is necessary for those who are sober and well instructed in the Faith to come to the conclusion that the apparitions are not of the supernatural. He asked me to please tell him at least one reason. I told him about the case of the ex-Franciscan priest, Ivica Vego. Due to his disobedience, by an order of the Holy Father, the Pope, he was expelled from the Franciscan religious order OFM, by his Father General, dispensed from his vows and suspended *a divinis*. He did not obey his order and he continued to celebrate Mass, distribute the sacraments and pass the time with his missions. It is unpleasant to write about this, yet it is necessary in order to see who Our Lady is speaking of. According to the diary of Vicka and the statements of the 'seers', Our Lady mentioned 13 times that he is innocent and that the Bishop is wrong. When his mistress, Sloba Leopolda, a nun, became pregnant, both of them left Medjugorje and the religious life, and began to live together near Medjugorje where their child was born. Now they have two little children. His prayer-book is still sold in Medjugorje and beyond in hundreds of thousands of copies.

3 The Marian theologian, Rene Laurentin, behaves in the same manner. He came to visit me around Christmas 1981, and I offered him dinner. He asked me why I do not believe in the apparitions. I told him that according to the diary of Vicka and the words of the other 'seers' this 'Lady' has been speaking against the Bishop. Laurentin quickly responded: "Don't publish that, because there are many pilgrims and converts there." I was scandalized by this statement made by this well known Marianologist. Unfortunately, this has remained Laurentin's position, to hide the truth, and defend falsehoods. He has written ten books on the subject of Medjugorje, and in almost all of them, the truth and Bishop Zanic are under fire. He knows well what people like to hear. Therefore, it was relatively easy for him to find those who would believe him: "A veritate quidam audiamus aversari, ad fabulas autem converterentur." — They will turn away from listening in the truth and wander into myths. (2 Tim. 4:4) The 'seers' and defenders of Medjugorje, led by Laurentin, from the very outset have seen that the modern

believer in a communist country very quickly believes in everything 'miraculous', in apparent miraculous healings and apparent messages from 'Our Lady'.

4. The main players on which Medjugorje rests are retired Archbishop F. Franjo R. Laurentin, Lj. Rupcic OFM, Amorth, Rastrelli SJ., and some Franciscans and charismatics from all over the world. Many books have been quickly published, as well as articles, films and souvenirs. On the move are tourist agencies, pilgrimages, prayer-books written by the two Franciscans Vego and Prusina, who were expelled from the Franciscan Order. These things are published in many languages, as many as 600,000 copies. There are fanatical prayer groups that are inspired by the apparent messages of Our Lady, and the great machinery of all—money. No one even mentions that a high priest throws doubt on the 'apparitions'. The Bishop has been warning everyone, but the 'machinery' has been moving forward. There have been mentioned 30 miraculous healings, then 150, 200, 300 and so on. Laurentin chose 56 dossiers and sent them to the 'Bureau medical de Lourdes'. Dr. Mangiapan responded in his Bulletin of April 1984, that these dossiers have no practical value, and they cannot be used or considered as serious proofs of the apparitions at Medjugorje. Much has been written about the healing of Dianne Basile. I sent the dossier to Dr. Mangiapan, who studied the case and then took the position 'opinion plus-que reservee'—it is a case of Multiple Sclerosis.

5. The credibility of the 'seers' — Mirjana Dragicovic. One month after the beginning of the 'apparitions' I went to Medjugorje to question the 'seers'. I asked each of them to take an oath on the cross and demanded that they must speak the truth. (This conversation was recorded on tape.) The first was Mirjana. We went in look for our sheep when at once: "The advocate came in the parish interrupted and told me that they actually went out to smoke, which habit they had from their parents." "Wait a minute, Mirjana, you are under oath. Did you go out to look for your sheep?" She put her hand over her mouth and said, "Forgive me, we went out to smoke."

Later on, she told us that Our Lady had said that all faiths are equal. How much can we believe of what Mirjana says?

6. Vicka Ivankovic has been the main 'seer' from the beginning. She is the creator of Medjugorje. Rev. Tomislav Vlasic OFM, has launched the main portion of the falsehoods regarding Medjugorje. He presented himself to Pope John Paul I, in a letter dated May 13, 1984 as follows: "I am Rev. Tomislav Vlasic, the one according to Divine Providence who guides the seers of Medjugorje." It would have been easier for him that he withdrew into the desert and that he had remained

silent, because his past speaks enough about him. Vicka spoke and wrote much, and in so doing she fell into many contradictions. Professor Nikola Bulat, a member of the First Communion, questioned her and wrote a 60 page study on her. He numbered all the illogicalities and falsehoods found in her diary.

20. Slander against the Bishop. "The Bishop also believed in the beginning." This is not true! While the communists were persecuting the Franciscans, the 'seers' and pilgrims, I defended all of them, and therefore I did not change my mind "because of threats by the Republic commission or because the diocesan priests sought this from me." This is simply fabricated slander by many. While I was publicly defending the imprisoned Franciscans, Rev. Jovan Zovko said during the investigations that the Bishop was a 'wolf' and a 'hypocrite'. These are the exact words written down by him, Zovko's lawyer. N. N., asked through a colleague what I had done to Zovko to deserve such heavy accusations. Rev. Tomislav Vlasic often put 'Our Lady's words into the mouths of the seers', such as 'Our Lady's affirmation that Satan (in this case the Bishop) is out to destroy her plan. He wrote this more clearly in a letter to friends in the Vatican. I complained about this accusation that he had called the Bishop Satan, in front of Vlasic and his Provincial. He did not deny my objection but rather, he justified his words by saying that he wrote this while under the influence of extreme emotion. A person can say something while in an emotional state, but this cannot be written down and translated into foreign languages.

21. By Their Fruits. The most common argument of the defenders of Medjugorje is that the fruits of the events in Medjugorje prove that Our Lady is appearing there. Those who know a little more than the pilgrims who come to Medjugorje say: 'the fruits of the staunchest defenders of Medjugorje show that they themselves do not believe in the apparitions. If all the 'ugly things' could be made public then surely the answer would be clearly negative to everyone. Yet Laurentin, Rupcic, Vlasic, Barbanc and others miraculously hide the truth. If the defenders of Medjugorje come across someone who is sceptical of the apparitions, they quickly isolate this person, accuse him of something or declare him mad. (J.L. Marja). The majority of the pious public has naively fallen victim to the great propaganda, the talk of the apparitions and of the healings. These people themselves have become the greatest propaganda for the events. They do not even stop to think that the truth has been hidden by deliberate falsehoods. They do not know that not one miraculous healing has occurred that could have been verified by competent experts and institutions such as the 'Bureau medical de Lourdes'. No one knows of any healed from Hercegovina. Everyone knows that little Daniel,

old Joan Vasilj, Venka Bragic and others cited in the first books about Medjugorje were not healed at all.

24. ***

A number of good Franciscans have begged me to write so that together we could start a battle against the lies of Medjugorje because they believe that "God will punish us Franciscans severely because we have spread lies and falsehood throughout the world and made money on them."

Of the 1,100 diocesan priests in the Diocese of Herzegovina, not one believes in the apparitions. Of the 42 bishops of Yugoslavia (ordinaries, auxiliary and retired), only one has been outspoken in declaring his belief and has defended the events. Of the 15 members of the first Commission, which was formed by the Bishop of Mostar with the help of the Bishops and provincials of Yugoslavia, 11 of the members said that there is nothing supernatural in the events of Medjugorje, two (Franciscans) claimed that the apparitions are authentic, one member said that there was something "in the air" (in the beginning) and one abstained. That which the Commission worked on for three years, the Holy See (contrary to what has been spread by the defenders of Medjugorje) never asked for, or saw, or gave a judgement of. Neither did the Holy See abandon the Bishop.

26. The Italians know well the story of Gigliola Elze Giorgini, the foundress of the false order "*Via Opera di Gesù Misericordioso*". Separated and remarried civilly, she spent time doing quackery. She gathered young women for her order and she received and carried great amounts of money. She had two priests in her service and many houses. She led a double life and had false stigmata which she made herself. Her 'disciples' followed her fanatically and they called her *Mamma Elze*. She had many vocations as well, but some who left her later on declared that she led an immoral life. She had many jewels and gold, two yachts, 32 cars, etc. Many in the Church objected to her way of life while others fanatically defended her, citing good fruits. She even received praise from two Bishops. Twice during the night police raided her room in the mother house and they found her in bed with one of her seminarians. A scandal broke out and she was sentenced twice to many years in prison, along with a Franciscan who was her confessor. The press wrote for years about this scandal. An illicit film was made as well, yet her followers fanatically and blindly defended her, even when the order fell apart. According to them, she was a saint who attracted many vocations, and this was argument enough for many that from the 'fruits' she was obviously inspired by God! Religious blindness is extremely hard to cure. Fanaticism brought the beginning of the heresies in the Church: today it is the foundation of sects.

27. ***

"What have you done to Our Lady?" For nine years they have been dragging you along as a tourist attraction. They have been speaking with you whenever it pleased them, as if you were a bank teller. They have fabricated messages, and they say that you come and appear there, but beyond their own arguments they have nothing to prove that what they say is true. The whole world is in expectation of a 'great sign' and the naive still wait and believe. Unfortunately this false conviction will bring great disgrace and scandal upon the Church. Those who lead the events are not converting even though the threat of the abolition of the Province by the General hangs over them.

28. There are many prayers and pious activities in Medjugorje. Some say that there have been conversions as well. I have received many truly touching letters, and I feel sorry for those who will sooner or later be disappointed. But there has also been fanaticism, superstition and misinformation in the events of Medjugorje. I have also received many rude accusations in the mail which I cannot mention, all in the name of the 'Queen of Peace'. That which is positive in these events cannot justify the falsehoods and lies that have been spread in order to win the world over for God.

I know that there will probably be many sincerely pious souls that will misunderstand me and consider me an enemy of Our Lady. I have been to Lourdes many times and to other shrines that have been used in with apparitions that the Church has recognized. What I am doing is defending the faith, defending the Church, and I pray to God that I am able to give up my life for this.

29. Those who have written about Medjugorje have told their books well and have made great profits. Unfortunately, those who have written critically have not fared as well because they have come across an organized boycott. For the other side of the story, people should read:

Dr. Ivo Sivrie, OFM (A Franciscan born in Medjugorje now living in St. Louis USA): "*La face cachée de Medjugorje*" Book 1 1988 p. 400 (French edition) Editions Pulvis C. p. 300, Saint-François-du-Lac, Québec, Canada, J0C 1S0 Tel. (514) 468-3036

Dr. Ivo Sivrie, OFM '*The Hidden Side of Medjugorje*', volume 1 1989 Ed. Pulvis, Saint-François-du-Lac, Québec (English Version)

E. Michael Jones, '*Medjugorje: The Untold Story*', Pickcity Press, 706 Marquette Ave. South Bend, IN 46617, USA 1990 pp. 137.

E. Michael Jones, *Medjugorje: The Untold Story II* Fidelity Press pp.

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P.A. Gramaglia, 'L' "Equivoco di Medjugorje" Apparizioni mariane di fenomeni di mediania?' Claudiana, Toronto, 1987 pp. 172.

Appendix B

Signs and Wonders — A Warning

by Cardinal Ottaviani, *L'Osservatore Romano*, February 14 1951

No Catholic questions the possibility of miracles or doubts that they do happen. Christ's mission and His divine Nature were proved by the many great miracles He performed here on earth. The early Church overcame initial difficulties and persecutions because the Holy Ghost gave her special help that expressed itself visibly in the gifts the Apostles enjoyed and in the large number of the elect among the first generations of Christians. Once the Church was consolidated these special gifts of the Holy Ghost, as we can well understand, grew less; but they have not ceased. The help of the Holy Ghost and the presence of Christ in His Church will last until the end of time. The former shows itself by supernatural signs, and by miracles.

By way of example, it is enough to call attention to the miracles that are examined during the process of the beatification of the servants of God or the canonization of the Blessed. Such miracles are rigorously tested both scientifically and theologically. One might add that the rigour with which the miraculous cures at Lourdes are examined is common knowledge.

Let no one call us enemies of the supernatural, therefore, if we set ourselves now to the task of warning the faithful against unchecked statements concerning certain supposed supernatural happenings, statements which are fairly widespread at the present time, and which might jeopardize the recognition of a true miracle and bring it into discredit.

Our Lord Himself has put us on our guard against 'false prophets' who 'will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray if possible, even the elect.' (Matt. 24 24). Such wonders have occurred from the earliest days of the Church (Acts 8:9). For this reason the Church has the right and duty to judge the truth and the nature of facts and revelations said to have come about by a special intervention of God. And it is the duty of all good children of the Church to submit to this judgment.

As a mother, the Church has to bear the burden of a mother's heavy and sorrowful duties, and, like all mothers, she sometimes has the duty not only to take action, but to suffer, to keep silent, and to wait. Fifty years ago who would have thought that the Church would now be in a position of having to warn her children, even her priests, to be on their guard against so-called miracles, against all those

happenings acclaimed as preternatural, which are arousing the interest of the masses, now here, now there, in almost every continent and country? Fifty years ago, when the scientific and positivist attitude was rife, people would have laughed at anyone who paid attention to and believed in what was called superstition of the dark ages. Fifty years ago people reviled the Church because she alone persisted in upholding the existence of miracles, their spiritual worth, negative or positive, and their beauty or ugliness. One of the commonest and most solemn of subjects in the field of apologetics at that time was the miraculous. Now the Church has to warn her children through the lips of bishops, repeating the words of the Divine Master (Matt. 24: 24) not to allow themselves to be easily led away by such happenings and not to believe in them save with the eyes wide open and only when the authorities, after the needed inquiries, have given their reports.

For some years past we have witnessed an increase of popular bunkering after the wonderful, even in the sphere of religion. The faithful repair in vast crowds to places where visions and wonders are supposed to have taken place. Whilst, at the same time, they abandon the Church, the Sacraments, preaching and instruction. People who are ignorant of the first words of the Creed set themselves up as ardent apostles of religious belief and practice. Some of them do not hesitate to speak of the Pope, the bishops and the clergy in terms of severe blame, and then are very annoyed when the latter do not take part with the crowd, in all the enthusiasm and outbursts of certain popular movements.

Although this is not pleasant, it causes no surprise. Man's feelings are natural, even religious feelings. Just as man is a rational animal, so he is a political and a religious animal. By bringing disorder and confusion into the nature of man and his feelings, original sin has, one may say, also attacked religious feeling. This is the explanation of the wanderings and errors and twistings of truth in the history of mankind. Yet it is a fact that such errors are much more troublesome where religion is concerned. When they came to redeem man from his darkness and shortcomings, revelation and grace restored him to his true nature especially in matters of religion. Once having healed man's wounded and unclean nature, grace gives it an overflow of strength to be used in the service and love of God. The Church, the custodian and interpreter of the true religion, was born of the word and of the blood of Our Lord.

To think oneself religious, in whatever way that may be is not necessary. What is needed is to be truly religious. As in the case of other feelings, there can be, and in point of fact there are, wanderings away from true religious feeling. Religious feeling must be guided by reason, nourished by grace, and governed, as is our whole life, by the Church, and even more strictly governed. There are such things

as religious instructions, religious education and religious training. Those who have set themselves against the authority of the Church and religious sentiment are light-heartedly, find themselves, today, faced with imposing outbursts of an instinctive religious feeling that completely lack the light of reason and the consciousness of grace—a religious feeling that has no check or control.

There follow deplorable acts of disobedience to the ecclesiastical authorities when they intervene to apply the needed brake. This happened in Italy after the so-called visions of Valtale, in France over the Espin and Bouvieres incidents which were akin to those at Hampsire-Sambre (Belgium); then in Germany at Heroldsbach, and in the United States of America in the case of the manifestations at Neenah. One could quote other examples in other countries near and far.

The present period stands between these two excesses which are, open subhuman irreligion, and unrestrained blind religious fervour. Persecuted by the supporters of the first and compromised by those who uphold the second, the Church simply repeats a twofold warning. But the warning is unheard and denial on the one hand and exaltation on the other.

There is no doubt that the Church does not wish to cast a shadow over the wonders worked by God. What is desired is simply to keep the faithful watchful concerning what comes from God and what does not come from God, but could, instead, come from His and from our adversary. The Church is the enemy of the false miracle.

A good Catholic knows from his catechism that the true religion rests on the true Faith, on that Revelation which ended with the death of the last Apostle, and has been entrusted to the Church, its interpreter and custodian. Nothing else necessary for our salvation can be revealed to us. There is nothing more for which we need look. We have every thing, if we wish to make use of it. Even the most accredited visions can indeed furnish us with new motives for fervour but not with new elements of life or doctrine. True religion abides essentially, apart from its place in the conscience, in the love of God and in what follows from it, namely, love of our neighbour. And, the love of God consists in doing the will of God, and obeying His Commandments rather than in acts of worship and ritual. This is true religion.

A good Catholic knows that in the saints themselves holiness consists not in the preternatural gifts of vision, prophecy, and wonder-working, but in the heroic exercise of virtue. That God should in some way endorse holiness by miracles is one thing, but that holiness consists in performing miracles is another. We must not confound holiness with what can be, and is generally, simply an unmistakable

sign of holiness, yet not always so clear as not to need the supervision of religious authority.

On this point the teaching of the Church has never been equivocal. The man who turns to events of doubtful interpretation rather than accept the word of God, loves the world more than God. Even when the Church authoritatively canonizes a saint, this does not guarantee the preternatural character of all the extraordinary facts connected with his life. Still less does the Church approve all his personal opinions. There is even less guarantee of all that is written, often with unpardonable levity, by biographers whose imagination outstrips their judgement.

We repeat that to be religious, it is necessary to be so with propriety and as a matter of duty. If we would be good and devout Catholics we must act with the same attention as that with which we apply ourselves to the most serious things in life. Being incredulous is just as harmful to the sincere believer as being ready to believe. True, not everyone can form his own opinion on every point. Yet we may ask, why should there be bishops? why the Pope?

Strange it is that no untrained person would dare to build a house by himself, be his own tailor, make himself a pair of shoes or cure himself of a sickness. Yet when it is a question of religious life, people set aside authority, refuse to place any trust in it, and even distrust and disobey it with impunity.

During the past 200 years, especially the last half century, the Catholic priesthood has been so much the object of accusation, insult and defamation at the hands of both politicians and writers that one can well understand how it is that the faithful have the greatest difficulty in approaching a priest and becoming friendly with him. But now when, undoubtedly, there is a return to God, as we see, the faithful must overcome their bias and once again begin to share their feelings, their thoughts, and their faith with the priest.

For the last ten years, while the religious authorities have shown restraint, the people have hastily busied themselves with wonders which, to say the least, have not been verified.

To be honest, we must admit that such events may be simply the expression of natural religious enthusiasm. They are not Christian events, and they give a dangerous pretext to those who are ready to discover at all costs the mingling and survival of paganism and superstition in Christian belief and life and especially in Catholicism. Just as wrongdoing may find its way into our daily lives, so may error. We must know it for what it is. Just as the Church has the power to forgive sins, so has it also been commanded by God to keep us from error.

Catholics should give ear to the word of God which the Church, and the Church alone, preserves and repeats whole and unadorned. They should not run

like sheep without a shepherd, and listen to other voices seeking to drown the voice of the Church. We have the Holy Scripture; we have tradition; we have the chief Shepherd and a hundred other shepherds next door to our own homes. Why should we offer a spectacle of foolishness or unhealthy excitement to those who oppose and despise us? "Christians, be more prudent" wrote Dante in his day. "Do not be like feathers that are the sport of every wind." The great poet gave the very same reasons that we give today: "You have the Old and the New Testament, and the Shepherd of the Church to Guide you." Dante's conclusion too, is the same as ours: "This is sufficient for your salvation." (Canto 5, Vv. 73-77)

Appendix C

Izjava Mostarskog Biskupa O Medjugorju

[Declaration of the Bishop of Mostar on Medjugorje delivered on July 25, 1987]:

Brothers and sisters, today here in Medjugorje the sacrament of confirmation will be administered, and probably you are expecting me to say a few words about those events which are the talk of the entire world. The Church watches all this, and especially what is of interest to her. This is confided to certain individuals and to commissions. As you know, at present, a Commission is mounting an inquiry on the matter. The said Commission has been established by the Yugoslavian Bishops' Conference, for the Church cannot endanger her credibility in this 20th Century world. It [the world] keeps an eye on her to catch her off guard, to criticize her and be able to say: this is what you do with everything else in your faith, everything else is like that...this is the way it is with your Christ.

I can tell you that during these six years I prayed, studied and kept silent. Many others also prayed, and I am grateful to them for that. In each Mass I celebrated, I had a thought for Medjugorje; in every rosary that I recited daily, I prayed to the Madonna for God's and the Holy Spirit's enlightenment. This helped me to gain a strong and firm conviction about everything I have heard, read and experienced.

Here people are praying and fasting a lot, inspired as they are, of course, by the belief that these events are indeed supernatural; and to preach untruth to the faithful about God, Jesus and the Madonna is worthy of the depths of Hell.

Through all my prayers, my work and research, I have sought one goal only: the discovery of truth. For that purpose, in 1982, I established a Commission of four members which later was expanded to fifteen, thanks to some bishops and father provincials. The larger body included people from nine theological faculties, seven dioceses in Spain, San Damiano in Italy, and tens of similar cases in recent years. In Garabandal the visionaries kept saying that the Madonna had promised a big sign for the entire world. Since then twenty-five years have passed and that big sign has not appeared. Had the Madonna left a sign here, everybody would know what this is all about.

The Madonna, they say, started to appear on the Podbrdo of the Mountain Crnica, but when the militia forbade going there, she came into houses, into forests, fields, vineyards and tobacco fields; she appeared in the church, on the altar, in

the sacristy, in the choir loft, on the roof, on the church steeple, on the roads, on the way to Cerma, in a car, on buses, in classrooms, in several places in Mostar and Sarajevo, in monasteries in Zagreb, Vaduz, Switzerland and Italy, once again on the Podbrdo, atop Krizevac, in the parish, in the rectory, etc. It is certain that not even half of the places where the alleged apparitions have taken place have been mentioned, so much so that an earnest man — who venerates the Madonna — asked himself: "My Madonna, what are they doing to you?"

In this diocese, by divine decree, I am the shepherd, teacher of faith, and judge in the matters of faith. Since Medjugorje's events have created tension and division within the Church (some believe in it, some do not), and have evaded Church control, since the recommendations and decisions of the said authorities such as the Commission, the Congregation, and the Bishops' Conference have been ineffective, I, the Ordinary of Mostar, responsible before God for the discipline in the diocese, repeat and sanction former decisions of the ecclesiastical authorities. I do forbid the priests who organize pilgrimages or come here ascribing a supernatural character to these events, to celebrate Mass in the territory of my diocese, and this until the Commission of the Bishops' Conference ends its inquiry.

I turn to you, Immaculate Virgin and Mother, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, Mother of this congregation which is looking for you, prays to you and loves you. I am turning to you, as your servant and Bishop of Mostar, and before the entire world I proclaim my deep and unshakable faith in all the privileges that God has endowed you with, by which you are the first and the most distinguished creature. I also affirm my deep and unshakable faith in your intercession with almighty God for all the needs of your children in this valley of tears. I assert my deep and unshakable faith in your love toward us sinners, and that love you confirmed with your apparitions and assistance. I myself have led pilgrimages to Lourdes. Exactly through the virtue of that faith, I your servant, Bishop of Mostar, before the great multitudes which called on you, find and accept your great sign which became sure and clear after these six years. I am not in need of a special sign, but it is necessary to those who believed in the untruth. That sign to me is that for six years you steadfastly remained silent to all rumours about the sign: it will be, they said, on the hillside of apparitions, visible and permanent; it is going to be realized soon; it will be before long, in a while; be patient for a while, so they were saying in 1981... Then again: it will be realized on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, for Christmas, for the New Year, etc.

Thank you, Madonna, because with your long silence of six years you have demonstrated that you have not spoken here, not appeared, nor given any message or secret nor promised a special sign. Blessed Virgin, Mother of Christ and of us,

intercede for peace in this restless region of the Church, in the diocese of Mostar, intercede especially for this place, for this parish, where innumerable times your blessed name was mentioned in words which were not yours. Make them stop fabricating messages in your name. Accept, Blessed Virgin, satisfaction through the sincere prayers of the devout souls who have no part in fanaticism and disobedience to the Church. Let us all reach the real truth. Dear Madonna, humble and obedient servant of God, let the faithful of Medjugorje follow with their firm steps the shepherd of the local Church so that all of us might together glorify and praise you in truth and love. Amen!

+ Pavao Zanic, Bishop
Mostar, July 24, 1987

The author drew upon source material from the following books, articles and publications in the compilation of this work:

Various Newsletters from 'The Little Pebble', Nowra, NSW.
Statement of Bishop W. Murray, Bishop of Wollongong, NSW.
Statement of Bishop T. Muldoon, Sydney. 'Catholic Weekly', March 6, 1986.
Audio tape of William Kamm, alias 'The Little Pebble'.
Pamphlet: 'Highlights of the Messages from Heaven given to The Little Pebble', 1990.
Signs and Wonders by Fr. Lawrence S. Brey, S.A., Ph.D.
Dayside Unveiled by J. Donovan.
Necedah Revisited - Anatomy of a phony apparition by M. Moloney.
'Beware of False Prophets' article by Fr. J. Violette.
'Private Revelations' article by Fr. R. McKenna O.P.
Bishop Zanic's statements on Medjugorje.
Ascent of Mount Carmel by St. John of the Cross.
The Catholic Encyclopedia.
The Battle for the Mystical Mind by M. Moloney.
Spiritism: Facts And Frauds Rev. S.A. Blackmore.
Visions and Revelations in the Spiritual Life by Fr. Gabriel (1950)
'Traditional Teachings on Apparitions' article by Rev. W. T. Welsh.
Revelations and the Church by Laurent Volken.
Medjugorje: The Untold Story by E. Michael Jones.
'The Choice of Christianity' The Remnant, May 13, 1990.
Fidelity USA, February 1989.
Matameo Acario by J. B. Boucher from History of Religious Sentiment pp. 69-71
Three Ages of the Religious Life Chapter 54, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange

"You would think the Devil would keep quiet inasmuch as men are almost all working for him, for his triumph. Well ... no ... he turns himself into an Angel of Light, aping the true apparitions, truly divine. Later, he will show his horns, in order to destroy the true, divine apparitions by his impostures. It is noteworthy that in all these false apparitions there are always many flattering words directed to certain persons, which these seers, seeing only the devil, apply to some gullible person wrapped in refined self-love. It is also true that there are visionaries without visions, who do not even need the devil's help, being themselves possessed." (Extract from Melville's Letters. Melville was one of the seers of the Apparition of La Salette, approved by the Church.)

"Wherein the Devil habitually meddles so freely (in revelations) that I believe it impossible for a man not to be deceived by them, unless he strive to reject them, such an appearance of truth and security does the Devil give them." (St. John of the Cross 'Ascent of Mount Carmel' Chap. 37.)

"If we are unable to distinguish these marks (of the Diabolical Spirit) it is because we are asleep and not watchful. Be on your guard, therefore, and well protected with spiritual arms. Force their tricks and deceits in order that when they try to deceive you, you will be able to trick them." (St. John Chrysostom.)

"When the devil abuses our sense with false apparitions he does not draw us away from the true faith, that is, he acts and uses words that are not against the teachings of the true faith. But afterwards he begins to propose things that are false and erroneous, it becomes necessary to exercise great care and to have a very penetrating discernment to avoid following him and to flee from him as quickly as possible." (St. Ambrose.)

"During the time of the approach of the Punishment announced at La Salette, an unlimited number of false revelations will arise from hell like a swarm of flies; a last attempt of Satan to choke and destroy the belief in the true revelations by false ones." (Marie Julie Jahenny of Le Frondaire.)